Geneva-13 December 2012- The **World Health Organization** (WHO) welcomes the **data gathering** and **methodological innovations** of the **Global Burden** of **Disease 2010** (GBD) which has relied on the contributions of many researchers and scientists, including some from WHO.
In some areas, there was close collaboration between the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) and WHO staff and the GBD results are similar to WHO's recent estimates. In other areas, the results of the GBD differ substantially from existing analyses done by WHO and other United Nations agencies at global, regional and country levels. In yet many other areas, the GBD results update, and are broadly similar to, previous WHO analyses.

Academic institutions such as IHME have a strong interest in developing novel, cutting-edge methods for their research. This can result in scientific advances which may influence official UN statistics, once replicated and evaluated by other experts.

In an effort to provide the world with the best possible comparable global health statistics, WHO will host a meeting in February 2013 to take stock of existing and new approaches in global health estimation and to discuss ways to improve current practices.

Participants will include chairs of key WHO disease expert groups, relevant UN agencies, donors and representatives from countries and academia, including IHME.

WHO is accountable to Member States and works closely with them to produce internationally comparable statistics that adhere to agreed criteria and methodologies. We work continuously with experts from academic institutions to develop and improve our methods and to take into account new developments in data and analytic methods. We anticipate that we will make use of many of the GBD analyses, and that others will influence further research and scientific debate towards improving global health estimates.

The real need is to improve the accuracy of global health data so that we no longer have to rely so much on statistical modelling to estimate the disease burden. Currently only 34 countries – representing 15% of the world's population – produce high quality cause-of-death data and almost all of these are in Europe and the Americas. WHO is committed to working closely with

developing countries to improve their health information systems including birth and death registration.